

**LOCAL LAW 41 of 2016:
2024 ANNUAL REPORT**

**NEW YORK CITY ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN’S SERVICES
DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

A. INTRODUCTION

Local Law 41 of 2016 requires an annual report documenting the number Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) in contact with ACS and DYCD or their contracted providers “to provide data on youth either at-risk or sexually exploited, description of services provided, and document their methods for collecting data regarding this population.

The New York City (NYC) Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) and Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) are jointly submitting this report for 2024 which contains the following information:

- A. *The number of youths in contact with DYCD’s runaway and homeless youth services or ACS who are referred as, self-report as, or are later determined to be sexually exploited.*
- B. *Data disaggregated by age, utilizing the following ranges:*
 - *under 12 years old.*
 - *12-15 years old.*
 - *16-18 years old; and*
 - *over 18 years old.**and disaggregated by gender, and by whether such children had contact with the department or ACS.*
- C. *The number of sexually exploited children identified who received services from DYCD and/or ACS.*
- D. *A description of services provided by DYCD and ACS to meet the targeted population’s needs including number of designated beds designated, and the types of mental health and health services provided to such children.*
- E. *The methods DYCD and ACS utilized to collect data regarding the number of sexually exploited children.*

2024 DATA SUMMARY

In 2024, ACS, DYCD and the Safe Harbour providers served a total of 843 youth referred as, self-reported as, or determined to be sexually exploited, or at-risk for sexual exploitation.

Table 1. Youth referred as, self-reported as, or determined to be sexually exploited or at-risk for sexual exploitation served by ACS and DYCD in 2024: 843	
Safe Harbour Providers <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Child Trafficking Mailbox - 181• Child Trafficking Database - 25• Children’s Village Counselors at the Children’s Center - 29• Hetrick Martin Institute Internships - 14• Hetrick Martin Institute Groups - 26• Hetrick Martin Individual Services - 43• Foster Care Unplugged Groups - 15• Day One Groups - 67• Emergency Funds - 69	469

DYCD Runaway and Homeless Youth Services	138
ACS Prevention Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-Advocate Prevention Cases – 0 • Advocate Prevention Only (ADVPO) Cases – 72 • Family Assessment Program (Advocate) Cases - 136 	208
ACS Placement Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children’s Village Empower House - 5 	5
Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) Confirmed Victims of Human Trafficking	23
Total Newly Identified Exploited or at Risk for Exploitation Youth Served in 2024	843
Note: Previously identified youth for whom notifications were received and served in 2024: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Trafficking Mailbox - 148 • Children’s Village at the Children’s Center - 18 	166

It should be noted that the overall number of youths identified as “trafficked or at-risk for trafficking” increased by eighty-three (83) youth between 2023 (760 youth identified) and 2024 (843 youth identified). This illustrates a continuing upward trend in youth identification and service provision. In 2024, the number of youths identified as follows:

- ACS Child Trafficking Mailbox increased as compared to 2023 (181 in 2024 as compared to 124 in 2023).
- The number of Child Trafficking Database (CTDB) Federal level notifications also increased (25 in 2024 as compared to 16 for 2023). However, a greater percentage of overall OCTPP identified youth. OCTPP Mailbox and CTDB combined met the Federal Definition level in 2023 (69 in 2024 compared to 42 in 2023).
- Children/youth identified as trafficked or at-risk in Advocate Prevention Only (ADVPO) (71 at-risk and 1 Federal level in 2024 vs 56 at-risk and 1 Federal level in 2023).
- Youth were identified within the Family Assessment Program (FAP) (136 at-risk and 2 Federal levels in 2024 vs 178 at-risk and 4 Federal levels in 2023) cases. The reduction in children identified by FAP could be due to the lesser number of initial screenings performed in 2024 (2,266 screenings) as compared to 2023 (2,916 screening).

Therefore, not only were more youth identified to the Safe Harbour Program overall in 2024 (843 in 2024 compared to 760 in 2023), but a higher percentage (38%) of the 181 youth identified to the Child Trafficking Mailbox and Child Trafficking Database screenings in 2024 met the Federal Definition of Sex Trafficking as compared to 2023 (which in itself had a 30% increase as compared to 2022).

It is important to note that the actual determination as to whether some youths are at-risk for exploitation or have been exploited is challenging. Many youths who are considered at-risk for exploitation may have actually been trafficked, but chose not to disclose that information, or even outright deny exploitation. Therefore, the data in this report captures both exploited youth and youth determined to be at-risk for exploitation and these categories cannot be disaggregated. It should also be noted that there may be overlap between provider data and victim confirmations by the NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA), whose information is confidential. There is no means to determine whether or how frequently this occurred.

The OCTPP work does not end at the time of youth identification. Every three (3) months, a follow up is conducted on identified youth that are still active within the NYC child welfare system (protective, preventive, foster care, detention). Each youth is researched within ACS’ database of record (Connections) and the

recorded services are assessed for trafficking relevant appropriateness. Follow-up is conducted to assess the services provided and if additional support is needed to safety planning input for all identified youth.

Provider Breakdown:

In 2024, programs funded or affiliated with the NYC Safe Harbour Program served 469 Youth Exploited or At-Risk

The NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA) Confirmed 33 Exploited Youth:

- Twenty-three (23) youth between the ages 0 and 23 were confirmed as sexually exploited by The NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA).

In 2024, DYCD Served 138 Exploited and/or At-Risk for Exploitation Youth Through Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) Programs:

- 75 youth received Crisis Services Programs.
 - 24 youth received services from Transitional Independent Living Programs (TILS).
 - 39 youth received services at Drop-in Centers.
 - 9 youth served by DYCD-funded providers disclosed that they also receive some form of service from ACS.
 - Gender: 32 males; 81 females; 0 Gender Non-Conforming (GNC) youth and 23 youth who did not disclose their gender. Within those gender categories, 6 transgender youth were served: Drop-in Centers served 3 transgender youth, Crisis Services assisted 3 transgender youth, and TILS served 0 transgender youth.
 - Ages: 0 children between ages 12 and 15; 8 children between ages 16 and 18; 130 youth over age 18.
 - 62 youth received Mental Health referrals.
 - 74 youth received Mental Health counseling.
- Details are provided in Section C-1: DYCD Contracted Programs and Services to Meet the Needs of Sexually Exploited Children.

ACS Foster Care Placement and Advocate Providers Services Served 213 Exploited and/or At-Risk for Exploitation Youth:

- ACS Foster Care Placement Services served total of 5:
 - Children’s Village’s Empower House served 5 Sexually Exploited Youth in 2024.
- Advocate Prevention Only (ADVPO) providers served 72 total: 71 youth identified as at-risk, and 1 youth identified as trafficked.
- ACS Family Assessment Program (PINS Diversion/Advocate) served 136 total: 134 youth identified as at-risk, and 2 youth identified as trafficked.

Table 2. <u>Delineation of Data by Required Local Law 41 Categories:</u> Total = 843		
By Age:	Under 12 years old:	11
	12 to 15 years old:	191
	16 to 18 years old:	131
	Over 18 years old:	279
	Age unknown	231
By Gender: Note: DYCD RHY served 6 Trans youth who were counted within M/F.	Male:	137
	Female:	419
	Transgender Female:	13
	Transgender Male	12
	Gender Non- Conforming	15
	Gender Undisclosed	247

By Contact With DYCD or ACS:		
ACS only		324
DYCD only		129
Both ACS and DYCD		9
Unknown (Advocate and FAP cases do not disclose at-risk data specifics)		381
Breakdown of Advocate Case Youth Not at the Federal Definition Level (age and gender data provided only for Federal level, not for youth At-Risk.	ADVPO Prevention Services – 71 Family Assessment Program - 134	(205) These youth were encompassed in the Age Unknown and Gender Not Disclosed categories (See footnote vi.)

B. DATA CAPTURE METHODOLOGY

1. ACS Data Capture Methodology:

In 2024, ACS obtained demographic data of young people served by New York State Safe Harbour-funded programs from the Safe Harbour funded providers. Primarily, ACS obtained data through its Child Trafficking Mailbox and provider agency staff to send notifications of trafficked children, ask questions, request resources, and receive case practice guidance. External stakeholders, including the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC), other City agencies and community providers also use the Child Trafficking Mailbox to communicate with the OCTPP team. The Child Trafficking Mailbox is monitored by ten (10) OCTPP staff, who have extensive experience in child welfare and clinical service provision or law enforcement. OCTPP staff obtain updates on status, services and safety planning and collect demographic data.

Additionally, they respond to Federal Level screening notification generated by the Child Trafficking Database (CTDB), to support the child/youth and ensure the appropriate safety and service plan is established. OCTPP staff also attend and provide guidance at conferences and individual case consultations, and also to Safe Harbour non-child welfare case assistance requests.

In 2024, the Child Trafficking Mailbox received 5,678 emails, which identified a total of 181 children newly identified as trafficked, or at-risk of trafficking, and provided support to another 148 youth, all of whom had previously been identified as trafficked or at-risk. OCTPP also received notification of and assessed 196 additional youth who were determined to not be trafficked or at-risk, or not enough information was provided for a determination. ACS also accumulated data through electronic sex trafficking screenings in its CTDB, which sends an automatic notification whenever a child screened meets the Federal Definition level of sex trafficking. In 2024, the CTDB electronic sex trafficking screening process identified 25 children at the Federal Definition of Trafficking level.

Of the total 206 children identified to the OCTPP, 69 met the Federal Definition level. An additional 61 youth identified to the Mailbox met the High-Risk level and 76 youth met the Medium Risk level, and 148 youth met the No-Risk level or there was not enough information provided for a determination.

Screening Youth for Trafficking: OCFS Screening Tools and the ACS Child Trafficking Database (CTDB)

In 2024, ACS continued to follow its *Policy and Procedure 2020/05: Identifying Assessing and Safety Planning with Child Sex and Labor Trafficking Victims*. This policy, based upon NYS Office of Children and Families (OCFS) Administrative Directive, *15-OCFS-ADM-16: Requirements to Identify, Document, Report and Provide Services to Child Sex Trafficking Victims*. The cloud based CTDB permits staff and providers to not only screen electronically, but to also document service referrals relevant to the screening results and to generate four types of reports.

OCTPP team members manually input quantitative data from Mailbox and CTDB notifications into the NYS Office of Children and Family Services’ (OCFS) Safe Harbour Program’s standardized Excel spreadsheet. This data capture tool helped to gather uniform statistics from providers and thereby facilitated the ability for quarterly and annual data aggregation.

Table 3: Summary of 2024 Data Collected by the Office of Child Trafficking Prevention and Policy Through the Child Trafficking Mailbox and the Child Trafficking Database (CTDB):	
# Newly Identified Youth to the Child Trafficking Mailbox in 2024	181
# Newly Identified Youth to the CTDB in 2024	25
# Newly Identified Youth to <u>both</u> the Mailbox and CTDB in 2024 (documented as CTDB <u>only</u> to avoid duplication)	(23)
Total Number of Newly Identified Youth to OCTPP in 2024 (Child Trafficking Mailbox <u>and</u> CTDB):	206
# New Youth Identified at the Federal Definition of Trafficking in 2024	69
# New Youth Identified as At-Risk for Trafficking in 2024	137
# Previously Identified Youth Involved in 2024 Emails to the Child Trafficking Mailbox	148
# Newly identified youth for whom OCTPP received initial notifications, but upon assessment, were determined to not be at risk, or insufficient information was provided for determination	196
Total Number of Emails to the Child Trafficking Mailbox in 2024	5,678

It is important to note that collecting data on trafficked and at-risk youth can be challenging and complex for many reasons, including the trauma and fear of disclosing, fear of retribution, suspicion of law enforcement, developmental delays, and lack of understanding one is in fact trafficked.

DYCD Data Capture Methodology:

The RHY providers are instructed to complete the Safe Harbour (CSEC) report for each new reported case of CSEC as soon as the cases are reported. Every month, providers are asked to confirm no reports. The reports are made by DYCD’s contracted RHY providers in the electronic DYCD Connect, Participant Tracking System.

Table 4. NYC 2024 Safe Harbour Data Table, as Delineated by Agency and Indicator:

NYC Administration for Children's Services																	
2024 NYC Safe Harbour Data: Newly Identified Exploited Children and Children At-Risk of Exploitation																	
as reported by ACS, DYCD and Safe Harbour Providers																	
Safe Harbour Provider	Total Youth	Cis M	Cis F	Trans F	Trans M	No G Discl	GNC	<12	12-15	16-18	>18	Age unk	ACS only	DYCD only	ACS+DYCD	Unk	
Child Trafficking Mailbox* ***	181	10	162	0	0	9	0	10	115	52	4	0	181	0	0	0	
Child Trafficking Database****	25	1	23	0	0	0	1	0	16	9	0	0	25	0	0	0	
Children's Village at Children's Center	29	2	27	0	0	0	0	1	22	6	0	0	29	0	0	0	
DYCD RHY Programs	138	32	81	0	2	23	0	0	0	8	130	0	0	129	9	0	
OTDA Confirmations (0 - 23)	23	4	19	0	0	0	0	0	2	5	16	0	0	0	0	23	
CV Empower House (Placement)	5	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	0	0	5	0	0	0	
Preventive Advocate Cases	72	0	1	0	0	71	0	0	1	0	0	71	0	0	0	72	
Family Assessment Program (Advocate)	136	0	2	0	0	134	0	0	1	1	0	134	0	0	0	136	
HMI Internships (Tau Gamma)	14	3	1	5	2	0	3	0	0	1	13	0	0	0	0	14	
HMI Groups	26	8	3	3	6	1	5	0	0	1	25	0	0	0	0	26	
HMI Individual Services	43	12	14	5	2	4	6	0	0	0	43	0	0	0	0	43	
Foster Care Unplugged Groups	15	0	15	0	0	0	0	0	4	10	1	0	15	0	0	0	
Day One Groups	67	21	46	0	0	0	0	0	19	24	3	21	0	0	0	67	
Emergency Fund Provision	69	44	20	0	0	5	0	0	8	12	44	5	69	0	0	0	
Totals:	843	137	419	13	12	247	15	11	191	131	279	231	324	129	9	381	
Section Totals:	843	843						843					843				
* 23 additional youth notified to the Child Trafficking Mailbox were also screened through the CTDB. These youth were counted only as CTDB to avoid duplication.																	
** 27 additional youth identified by Children's Center Counselors were notified to the Child Trafficking Mailbox. These youth were counted only as Mailbox to avoid duplication.																	
***ACS' Office of Child Trafficking Prevention and Policy (OCTPP) additionally assisted 148 previously identified youth and Children' Village Counselors assisted 18 previously identified youth.																	
**** Data for the Child Trafficking Database only includes screenings at the Federal Definition of Sex Trafficking level, which are automatically notified to OCTPP, not for High or Medium Risk levels.																	
ACS' OCTPP also received notification of, and assessed 196 additional youth who were determined to not be trafficked or at-risk, or not enough information was provided for a determination.																	
DYCD RHY Crisis Services and TILs serve ages 16-20. Drop-in Centers serve ages 14-24.																	
DYCD RHY served 6 transgender (TG) youth (included within the other gender categories). Drop Ins served 3 TG youth, Crisis Shelters served 3 TG youth, TILs served 0 TG youth. See report for details.																	
OTDA collects data on confirmed victims of all ages, but only data from ages 0 to 23 was used as 23 is when all youth would have exited the child welfare system.																	
Preventive Advocate Cases: 44 youth screened as Medium Risk and 27 youth screened as High Risk for trafficking. 1 youth identified at the Federal Level, so demographics provided for the 1 Federal level youth.																	
Family Assessment Program Advocate Cases: 53 youth screened at High Risk and 81 youth screened as Medium Risk for trafficking. 2 youth identified at the Federal Level, so demographics provided for the 2 youth.																	
Hetrick Martin Institute provided groupwork, internships and individual services for LGBTQAI+ youth and young adults.																	
Day One provided groupwork for youth in foster care group homes and secure detention.																	
Foster Care Unplugged and OCTPP provided Mitigating Trauma Through Drama psychoeducational groups virtually for youth at foster care group homes.																	

C. SERVICE PROVISION FOR SEXUALLY EXPLOITED YOUTH

1. DYCD Contracted Programs and Services to Meet the Needs of Sexually Exploited Children

The central responsibility of DYCD is to administer city, state, and federal funds to community-based organizations that serve New York City's youth and families. DYCD funds a range of programs including immigration, afterschool, literacy, jobs and internships, parenting, and runaway and homeless youth programs and services.

DYCD's funded Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) services are designed to protect young people, and whenever possible, encourage family reunification. In cases where reunification is not possible, these programs help youth progress from crisis and transitional care to independent living arrangements. Youth who participate in DYCD-funded programs receive comprehensive services geared toward developing independent living skills, and strengthening their problem solving, decision making and communication abilities. This wide range of services includes food and clothing; medical services; substance abuse education; housing assistance; educational services; counseling; independent living skills training; employment counseling and assistance; recreation; legal assistance; and transportation assistance.

Services are provided to at-risk youth through Crisis Services programs (serving youth ages 16-20, as well as young adults ages 21-24) which offer emergency, voluntary short-term residential programs. Youth in need of longer-term residential services may obtain a referral through the Crisis Services programs to DYCD-funded Transitional Independent Living (TIL) programs (serving youth ages 16-20, as well as young adults ages 21-24) which assist youth in establishing independence through services such as educational and vocational programming, job placement, and counseling.

DYCD programs offer specialized services for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Questioning (LGBTQ) youth, pregnant and parenting youth and young adults, and sexually exploited youth. Over the past few years, the City funded a significant expansion of residential programs, followed by an expansion of Drop-in Center services, and including additional resources for mental health services and LGBTQ supports. DYCD's aggregate data is provided in Appendix A.

- a. **Crisis Services Programs** DYCD contracts with providers to offer a total of 258 beds for youth 16 through 20 years old plus an additional 35 beds for young adults 21 through 24 years old for a total of 293 beds. Crisis Services programs offer emergency shelter for runaway and homeless youth aged 16 - 20. These voluntary, short-term residential programs provide emergency shelter and crisis intervention services aimed at reuniting youth with their families. If family reunification is not possible, Crisis Services programs help arrange appropriate transitional and long-term placements.
- b. **Drop-in Centers** funds emergency intervention services at eight drop-in centers across the five boroughs. Three drop-in centers are located in Manhattan and one each in Brooklyn, Staten Island, and the Bronx and two in Queens. Each borough has one 24/7 drop-in center. These programs serve youth ages 14 through 24 with essentials such as food, clothing, and immediate shelter as well as access to counseling, support, and referrals to relevant services.
- c. **Street Outreach Program** is offered at-risk youth where they are. Currently, the street outreach is conducted by the contracted provider, Safe Horizon's StreetWork Project, with the use of vans. The Street Outreach's vehicle-based outreach program focuses on locations where youth are known to congregate. By going directly to where at-risk youth are, such as subway stations and transportation hubs, the Street Outreach Program, with the assistance of street outreach workers, develops rapport with youth and provides contact by disseminating information about RHY services, providing food, clothing and other resources; making referrals to other service providers; and transporting youth back to their homes or relatives, to Crisis Services programs, or to other safe locations.
- d. **Transitional Independent Living (TIL) Programs** – DYCD contracts with providers to offer 495 Transitional Independent Living support beds for youth 16 through 20 years old plus an additional 25 beds for young adults 21 through 24 years old for a total of 520 beds. Youth and young adults who are specifically identified as sexually exploited and in need of specialized services can be referred to Girls Educational and Mentoring Services' (GEMS) Transitional Independent Living program, when appropriate. The GEMS TIL program specializes in services specifically for female identifying youth who have experienced sexual exploitation. All young people residing in any of the DYCD-funded programs will receive ongoing case management and counseling to address individualized needs, including exploitation and service providers make referrals, as appropriate, to outside services.

II. New York State Safe Harbour-Funded Programs to Meet the Needs of Sexually Exploited Children

In 2024, New York State's Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) provided \$50,000 in funding to the Administration for Children's Services, New York City (NYC), so that NYC could continue to develop and implement a child welfare response to sex trafficking. Following is a summary of Safe Harbour-funded programs:

The Children's Village's Empower House at the Nicholas Scoppetta Children's Center

The Children's Village, a leading service provider in the field of commercial sexual exploitation, was awarded the Children's Center contract as of July 1, 2023 to provide expert service through the provision of Licensed Master Social Workers (LMSW) working as Commercially Sexually Exploited Child (CSEC) Consultants at the Nicholas Scoppetta Children's Center. The Children's Village Empower House social workers screened and assessed youth for trafficking indicators, assisted staff in identifying exploited youth, engaged with and advocated for youth, and provided trafficking relevant service recommendations and referrals. During 2024, the social workers served 56 new youth, 27 of which were notified to the Child Trafficking Mailbox (therefore aggregated within that data set and not counted towards the Children's

Center total for 2024 to avoid duplication). They also served an additional 18 youth who had been previously referred to them, for a total of 74 assessments during 2024. The consultants provided a total of 140 Safe Harbour groups for youth and technical support for staff.

Hetrick Martin Institute's Tau Gamma Internships, Trans Treats Groups and Individual Level Services

In 2024, Hetrick Martin Institute developed and implemented unique programming for LGBTQIA+ youth who may be engaging in, at-risk, or vulnerable to trafficking including the revamped Common Voices group and our established internship, Tau Gamma. The group and curricula was redeveloped in 2024 and aimed to provide education, resources, and a supportive community to HMI members, LGBTQIA+ youth, ages 13-24. Group topics included LGBTQIA+ comprehensive sexual health education, a job readiness workshop and a workshop around sex work and the law in the five boroughs. With 26 participants throughout the two cycles, this group was considered a success due to participants acquired and assessed confidence in their knowledge around sex work, risk, and resources to support their safety.

Fourteen (14) youth participated in the Tau Gamma internship, which focused on job readiness and career exploration. During the funded period, these youth members received Individual Level Services at HMI including Case Management, Pantry (clothing, showers, laundry, food, gender-affirming items), Dinner/Nightly Meal, Counseling, Reception, and other youth-based wraparound Groups.

Day One is the only organization in NYC that dedicates all of its resources to partnering with young people to address dating abuse and promote healthy relationships. Through a youth empowerment lens, Day One supports young survivors in navigating barriers unique to their experience. In 2024, through Safe Harbour grant funding, Day One provided twelve sessions of their Healthy Relationships 101 and their Consent and Coercion: The Ongoing Conversation workshops to a total of 67 unduplicated youth at foster care group homes, secure detention, and the Nicholas Scoppetta Children's Center.

Foster Care Unplugged (FCUP), a 501(c)(3) is an agency founded in 2016 by Melody Centeno, LMSW, to focus on enriching the lives of youth in foster care and youth at risk of being placed in the child welfare system by promoting positive spiritual, emotional, and physical outcomes for disadvantaged individuals. In 2024, FCUP continued its partnership with the OCTPP and New Yorkers for Children for the Mitigating Trauma through Drama groupwork model through its fourth year of funding. Ms. Centeno and OCTPP Executive Director (ED) Selina Higgins, who together co-wrote the curriculum, completed two cohorts in 2024 with 15 vulnerable youth residing at group homes. All sessions were provided virtually to accommodate the agency.

Provision of Emergency Funds to many older youths, who are no longer in foster care, have ongoing concrete needs, including diapers and formula for their infants or job interview preparation. Some youths are active with ACS through the Supervision to 21 Program which provides support and resources to youth who have left foster care, or other ACS programming such Youth Leadership Council, the College Internship Program. OCTPP assisted youth with their needs and acknowledged their participation through provision of emergency funds with multiple \$25 gift cards purchased with Safe Harbour funding based upon specific documented need (formula, diapers, interview outfit). In 2024, OCTPP provided emergency funds to a total of 69 non duplicated youth.

ACS' Office of Child Trafficking Prevention and Policy (OCTPP) leveraged the above services to youth. OCTPP works to raise awareness of trafficking, identify and provide appropriate services available to help youth, and coordinates the application of trafficking policy and database. Training on the policy and the use of the Child Trafficking Database as mandated by the policy for sex trafficking screenings is integral to staff ability to understand, screen and follow up with law enforcement referrals, access and provide resources and ensure other safety-focused aspects of practice. During 2024, OCTPP staff provided

trainings on the policy and CTDB screening skills to a total of, 3,356 staff specifically on the NYC screening process. The 3-hour Policy-CTDB Skills training, the three roadshows and eLearning accessibility will continue throughout 2025.

OCTPP's training provision is not limited to policy awareness and CTDB skills. In 2024, the OCTPP worked diligently and continually to provide the highest quality of training, alone or in partnership with other trafficking related professionals, by providing eighty-seven (87) high quality trainings which filled 12,645 training seats (mostly virtually, some in-person), through either directly provided by OCTPP team members (including the Foster Care, Preventive and Child Protective "Roadshows"), or through trainings produced by the Executive Director for the 3 virtual conferences:

- The NYC Child Trafficking Prevention Conference (in January for Human Trafficking Prevention Month): 15 workshops, filling 5,583 seats.
- The April is Child Abuse Prevention Month Spring Training Series: 6 workshops, filling 2,145 seats.
- The "Back to School" Fall Training Series: 6 workshops filling 1,984 seats.
- Additional trainings provided by the OCTPP filled 1,350 seats.
- ACS' Division of Youth and Family Justice (DYFJ) Juvenile Justice trainers filled 243 training seats with newly hired Youth Development Specialists.
- CTDB eLearning completions amounted to 750.
- In total ACS' 2024 trafficking awareness and skills training seats totaled 13,638.

OCTPP also provides consultation on cases, produces trainings and events, analyzes data, provides a variety of trafficking prevention group work models (some self-designed), and maintains seven e-mailboxes for communication with staff and external professionals on a variety of topics related to trafficking.

Additionally, OCTPP offers the following programming:

- OCTPP's ED also worked with ACS' Webmaster to update the six Trafficked Youth awareness and prevention webpages to provide information and downloadable resources. ACS' large-scale Trafficking Awareness Campaign continued in 2024 with the downloadable "Children are NOT for Sale" awareness campaign posters, and the "Understanding Child Trafficking and What YOU Can Do" brochure, similar to the tattoo removal palm cards, are all available in twelve (12) languages. ACS Preventing Youth Trafficking webpages with downloadable resources [here](#).
- "Movin' On" the NYC Child Tattoo Eradication Project and Network to assist trafficking victims and former gang members in positively moving forward with their lives through the provision of trauma informed tattoo removal and the provision of relevant support. During 2024, OCTPP received 7 initial tattoo removal inquiries, resulting in 3 youth referrals for youth.
- Direct service groupwork initiative, partnering with Foster Care Unplugged to provide the 8-session "Mitigating Trauma Through Drama" psychodrama therapeutic/trafficking awareness groupwork model. Through a 2-year grant funding, "Mitigating Trauma Through Drama" served fifteen (15) youth in 2024.
- Credible Messenger Program which specifically addresses safety and behavioral aspects of youth in care, using the video produced in 2021 to develop recruitment awareness and support recognition. Credible Messengers are lived experience individuals who can connect with and motivate youth to successfully challenge and transform destructive thinking, attitudes and actions. The Credible Messenger Program and its video was successfully presented as a panel presentation at the 2024 NYC Child Trafficking Prevention Conference and is also shown within the Mitigating Trauma through Drama groupwork model for youth in placement.
- In 2019, ACS released a 40 page, spiral bound, pocket sized "toolkit" entitled: "Child Trafficking and What YOU Can Do About It: Tools for NYC Child Welfare Professionals." For 2024, ACS increased awareness accessibility by developing a more user-friendly, downloadable .pdf version of the

toolkit, which staff and other interested parties can consult online or print and is featured prominently on the Preventing Youth Trafficking webpage.

III. ACS Contracted Placement Programs and Preventive Advocate Screenings to Meet the Needs of Sexually Exploited Children

In addition to services funded by the NYS Safe Harbour grant, ACS also contracts for specialized placement programs as part of its continuum of services for at-risk youth and victims of sexual exploitation. OCTPP works with contracted prevention programs concerning Advocates Preventive-Only (ADVPO) Cases to provide requested referrals without violating the confidentiality of the Advocate's Agreement.

A. Preventive and Family Assessment Program Advocate Cases:

The ACS Division of Prevention Services and ACS' Family Assessment Program (FAP), a Persons in Need of Supervision (PINS) diversion programs obtained redacted Advocate data from its contracted service providers. Advocate cases provide voluntarily requested prevention services (ADVPO) or PINS diversion services (FAP) for cases not involving a child in foster care or being referred to foster care, and not under investigation or having an open indicated child protective services report. ACS' contracted prevention and PINS diversion agencies do not transmit a breakdown of data on these confidential cases beyond a total number of children and their screened risk levels. Children screened at the Federal Definition of Trafficking level are identified to OCTPP, but only by age, gender, and borough. Advocate case sex trafficking screenings are not captured within the CTDB but are completed with paper templates. 2024 data provided by the Advocate agencies identified:

- Preventive ADVPO Screenings:
 - 8,705 total Rapid Indicator screenings, of which 72 youth screened as at-risk and thereby received further screening with the Comprehensive tool:
 - 27 youth screened at High-Risk for trafficking.
 - 44 youth screened at Medium-Risk for trafficking.
 - 1 youth screened at the Federal level.
- Family Assessment Program Advocate Screenings:
 - 2,266 total Rapid Indicator screenings, of which 136 youth screened as at-risk and thereby received further screening with the Comprehensive tool:
 - 81 youth screened as Medium-Risk for trafficking.
 - 53 youth screened as High Risk for trafficking.
 - 2 youth screened at the Federal level.

Note: these are cases where parents pro-actively reached out to seek services to strengthen their family prior to full crisis escalation, which may account for a higher percentage of youth being assessed as at-risk for trafficking rather than meeting the Federal Definition level.

B. Placement:

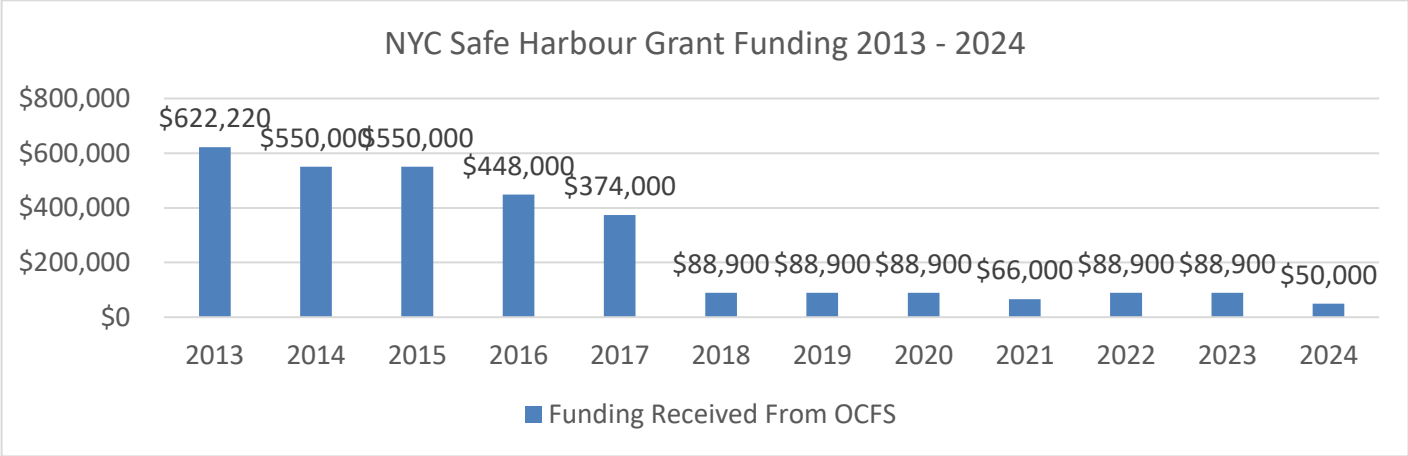
1. The Children's Village Empower House

The Children's Village is an ACS contractor that provides foster home, residential, community, mental health, and prevention services. Empower House NYC for trafficked youth opened in 2024. Empower House serves all genders and sexual orientations. Although they predominately have served females, they also have bed availability for males, gender non-conforming, and transgender youth. All Empower Programs are required to serve youth without discrimination. Empower House provides an intensely clinical, safety-oriented program, often utilizing Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) for youth to develop an understanding and acceptance of difficult feelings resulting from trauma experienced, along with coping skills. They also use Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT). It should be noted that other youth who have experienced trafficking received placement with additional foster care agencies, not

specifically dedicated to trafficked youth. These agencies received guidance and support from ACS’ Office of Child Trafficking Prevention and Policy. In 2024, Empower House Queens served a total of 5 girls.

Conclusion

Over the past twelve years, through Safe Harbour affiliation, ACS and DYCD have worked together to systemically recognize and address the needs of sexually exploited young people. The Safe Harbour Act with state and local agency resources have allowed us to strengthen our work in this area by enhancing existing services and developing increased specialized services for this population, training staff, and evaluating mechanisms to improve our efforts to identify and document sexually exploited youth. For twelve years (2013 to 2024), NYC has been the recipient of Safe Harbour grant funding from NYS OCFS as follows:



The above chart indicates the decrease in Safe Harbour funding since 2013. ACS is committed to serving this population and, while appreciative of the funds received, is open to discussing with OCFS opportunities to increase Safe Harbor funding or identify other funding streams.

ACS, DYCD, and our partner agencies remain committed to helping ensure youth are as safe and stable as possible as the unprecedented challenges related to the crisis have continued to unfold. We greatly appreciate the Council’s attention to this vulnerable population of children and look forward to discussing how the Council can provide additional support for ongoing work to help the trafficked and sexually exploited children of NYC.

Appendix A: NYC DYCD 2024 Safe Harbour Data

NYC Administration for Children's Services																
2024 NYC Safe Harbour Data: Newly Identified Exploited Children and Children At-Risk of Exploitation																
as reported by ACS, DYCD and Safe Harbour Providers																
Safe Harbour Provider	Total Youth	Cis M	Cis F	Trans F	Trans M	No G Disc	GNC	<12	12 to 15	16-18	>18	Age unk	ACS only	DYCD only	ACS+DYCD	Unk
DYCD RHY Programs	138	32	81	0	2	23	0	0	0	8	130	0	0	129	9	0